

## Message Text

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63

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 SAJ-01 OMB-01 EB-11 LAB-06

SIL-01 DRC-01 /157 W

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R 231904Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8967

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN WUTU

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT BE

SUBJECT: INTERNAL POLITICS - CABINET PRUNED, PROGRAM DISCUSSED

REF: BRUSSELS 0417; 5971 (NOTAL)

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

1. PRIME MINISTER LEBURTON LAID BEFORE PARLIAMENT OC 23

RESULTS OF WEEK'S INTENSIVE EFFORT TO RESOLVE PROBLEMS

WITHIN HIS THREE-PARTY GOVERNMENT. THE CABINET WAS REDUCED

FROM 36 TO 28 MEMBERS. DISCUSSION OF PROGRAMS, WHICH TOUCHED

UPON REGIONALIZATION, THE FLEMISH CULTURAL COUNCIL'S

LANGUAGE DECREE OF SEPTEMBER 16, THE BUDGET, EDUCATION, AND

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SOCIAL COSTS, THE IBRAMCO AND RTT AFFAIRS, ABORTION REFORM AND,

IN A VERY GENERAL WAY, INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, CONTAINED NO SURPRISES. DEBATE WILL BEGIN OCTOBER 24 WITH VOTE OF CONFIDENCE PROBABLY EARLY FRIDAY MORNING.

2. LEBURTON SAID 36 MEMBER CABINET - ALL THAT WAS POSSIBLE IN JANUARY - WAS UNWORKABLE THUS, THE REDUCTION. AS ANNOUNCED BY PALACE, COMMUNICATIONS MINISTER ANSEELE RESIGNED FOR "REASONS OF HEALTH" AND WAS REPLACED BY FELLOW SOCIALIST, SENATOR ELIE VAN BOGAERT. (SOCIAL CHRISTIANS HAD BEEN DEMANDING RESIGNATION OF ANSEELE, WHOM THEY CLAIMED WAS ULTIMATELY RESPONSIBLE FOR RTT CONTRACT SCANDALS.) MINISTER FOR MIDDLE CLASSES HANNOTTE, A LIBERAL, ALSO RESIGNED FOR REASONS OF HEALTH BUT WAS NOT REPLACED. DEPARTING STATE SECRETARIES WERE PETRY (COOPERATION ADN DEVELOPMENT), URBAIN (WALLOON HOUSING AND PLANNING), AND FAYAT (HARBOR POLICY), ALL SOCIALIST; VERLACKT-GAVAERT (FAMILY), VAN DE WIELE (FLEMISH HOUSING AND PLANNING), AND SCHYNS (TOURISM AND GERMAN-SPEAKING CANTONS), ALL SOCIAL CHRISTIANS; AND KEMPINAIRE (FOREIGN TRADE), A LIBERAL. WHICH MINISTERS WILL ASSUME RESPONSIBILITIES OF DEPARTING CABINET MEMBERS WAS NOT ANNOUNCED. END UNCLASSIFIED

3. COMMENT. BEGIN LOU. CABINET RESHUFFLE REPRESENTS ATTEMPT TO GET MORE WORKABLE CABINET, IN WHICH RESPECT DEPARTURE OF PETRY AND KEMPINAIRE REMOVES TOW THORNS FROM SIDE OF FOREIGN MINISTER VAN ELSLANDE. DISPOSITION OF RESPONSIBILITIES OF DEPARTING CABINET MEMBERS IS STILL IN DISPUTE, HOWEVER, AND POSSIBLE ASSUMPTION BY CUDELL (BRUSSELS REGIONAL AFFAIRS) AND DECLERCQ (VICE PRIME MINISTER AND FINANCE) OF FUNCTIONS OF PETRY AND KEMPINAIRE, RESPECTIVELY, COULD LEAVE FOREIGN MINISTER'S SITUATION LITTLE IMPROVED. (DEFRAIGNE, STATE SECRETARY FOR WALLOON REGIONAL ECONOMY, HAS ALSO INTRUDED ON FONMIN'S TERRITORY BUT WAS, POLITICALLY, UNTOUCHABLE.) DISPOSITION WILL ENTAIL EFFORT TO GIVE MINISTERS CUDELL AND GRAFE (WALLOON REGIONAL AFFAIRS) SOMETHING TO DO (THEIR COUNTERPART FOR FLANDERS, CHABERT, ALSO HEADS MINISTRY FOR FLEMISH CULTURE, A GOING CONERN); THUS ASSIGNMENT OF COMPETENCIES, WHEN MADE, MAY SEEM SOMEWHAT UNTIDY.

4. PROGRAM PRONOUNCEMENT IS BEST CHARACTERIZED AS HOLDING ACTION  
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RATHER THAN RESOLUTION OF FUNDAMENTAL SUBSTANTIVE DIVISIONS AMONG GOVERNMENT PARTIES ON BUDGETARY, ECONOMIC, AND, ESPECIALLY, REGIONAL/LINGUISTIC MATTERS. BOTH IT AND CABINET RESHUFFLE ARE EXPECTED TO RECEIVE PARLIAMENTARY OKAY.  
STRAUSZ-HUPE

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